

Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Program  
Administrative Guidelines  
Santa Barbara Municipal Code Chapter 14.46

(Revised 01/11/07)

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## SECTION I – WHEN INSPECTION IS REQUIRED

This section explains when inspection is required; outlines the administrative process used to notify property owner of inspection requirement; and details the timeline for compliance.

A. Health And Safety Inspections (SBMC 14.46.040.A.) - this includes inspections required in response to:

- A spill from a private sewer lateral; and/or
  - Observing lateral problems (roots, excess clear flow, failed mainline connection) during inspection of City lines; and/or
  - Potential problems noted during smoke testing (smoke emitting from the ground or connection of outdoor drain).
1. Property owner will be sent a letter notifying them that a described defect has been identified, and will be provided with a list of qualified plumbers to conduct an inspection. Property owner will be directed to inspect the line and submit the required inspection form and video tape within 30 days.
  2. If inspection form is not submitted within 30 days, a second letter will be sent to the property owner directing that the inspection be completed within 15 days and notifying the property owner that failure to complete the required inspection within the designated time frame will result in the issuance of an administrative citation.
  3. If inspection is not conducted and/or required forms are not submitted within the required time, a Notice of Administrative Citation will be issued together with direction to complete the required inspection within 10 days of the date of the notice or face an additional Administrative Penalty of \$150, and referral to the City Attorney's office for enforcement.

Nothing in the above guidelines shall prevent the City from requiring a more timely (or immediate) response if the sewer lateral is causing an on-going threat to public health or safety. An example of such a threat is a cross connection with a storm drain, or an overflow into the public right-of-way.

B. Events Requiring An Inspection Of Residential Sewer Laterals (SBMC 14.46.040.B.):

1. Inspections required for addition of 400 or more square feet of new dwelling space as determined by the Building Official.
  - a. Property owner will be notified of the requirement to submit a sewer lateral inspection video and inspection form by Community Development staff at the time that they submit plans for Community Development review.
  - b. The property will be "flagged" in the computerized permit monitoring system – Advantage.
  - c. Submittal of the standardized inspection report will be required prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
  - d. Public Works staff will review the video and issue either a Compliance Certificate or Notice of Required Repairs. Prior to issuance of the Building Permit, the Advantage database will be updated to indicate whether repair work is needed.

If review of the video shows that the sewer lateral needs repair or replacement, that work will be required to be completed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Repairs will be verified by either the Building Inspector, or Public Works Inspector.

2. Inspections required for two or more new plumbing fixtures:

- a. Property owners will be notified of the requirement to submit a sewer lateral inspection video and report by Community Development staff at the time that they submit plans for Community Development review.
- b. The property will be “flagged” in the computerized permit monitoring system – Advantage.
- c. Submittal of the standardized inspection report will be required prior to issuance of a Building Permit.
- d. Public Works staff will review the video and issue either a Compliance Certificate or notice of required repairs. Prior to issuance of the Building Permit, the Advantage database will be updated to indicate whether repair work is needed.
- e. If review of the video shows that the sewer lateral needs repair or replacement, that work will be required to be completed prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. Repairs will be verified by the Building Inspector, or Public Works Inspector.

C. Inspection Of Commercial Properties, Condominiums And Other Common Interest Developments (SBMC 14.46.040.C.)

1. Commercial properties and common interest developments are required to inspect their laterals once every ten years.

- a. Public Works staff will identify the APN numbers and accompanying addresses for the owners of all properties requiring sewer lateral inspections, using data available from the City’s automated map.
- b. Notices will be sent to the property address, and listed property owner. If a property management company is on record for the site, they will also be provided with a notice. Notices will advise the property owner that a sewer lateral inspection must be completed, and proper documentation submitted to the City within 90 days of the date of the notice.
- c. If no inspection occurs within the required time, a second notice will be sent requiring inspection within 30 days of the date of the notice, and advising that failure to complete the required inspection will result in the issuance of a \$100 Administrative Penalty.
- d. If the inspection is not conducted and/or required forms are not submitted within the required time, a Notice of Administrative Penalty will be issued together with direction to complete the required inspection within 10 days of the date of the notice or face an additional Administrative Penalty of \$150, and referral to the City Attorney’s office for enforcement.

D. Exemptions – Sewer Lateral Inspections Will Not Be Required Under The Following Conditions (SBMC 14.46.040.D.):

1. The Property owner submits documents showing that the sewer line has been installed within 20 years of the current date, and proper documents can be produced to show that the line was installed in accordance with codes and inspected. Proof of either a Building Permit or Public Works Permit shall be required.

2. The sewer line has been inspected within three years of the current date and the property owner can produce a copy of the Compliance Certificate showing that inspection did not indicate a need for repair.

## **SECTION II – QUALIFIED INSPECTION COMPANIES**

SBMC Section 14.46.050 requires that all reports shall be prepared by a licensed plumber. Licensed plumbers are those holding an appropriate license for the type of work being performed from the California Contractor's State License Board.

### **A. Certification Program**

Licensed plumbers will be required to attend a City of Santa Barbara Certification Program. The certification program will be offered on a regular basis. The content of the certification program will include:

1. Review of the scope and intent of the City's Sewer Lateral Inspection Program;
2. Review of the City's standard inspection form (Exhibit A);
3. Direction on how to complete the form;
4. Specifications for the video inspection, including the requirements for speed of travel of the camera in the lateral, and quality requirements (Exhibit B);
5. Direction on what is expected for inspection of the property to ensure outdoor drains are not connected to sewer; and
6. Direction on checking for backwater valve or need thereof

### **B. Subcontractors**

Licensed plumbers may employ subcontractors to do the actual videoing of the sewer line, but all reports must be signed by the certified licensed plumber.

## **SECTION III – CITY PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING INSPECTION SUBMITTALS**

### **A. Submittal Of Documents**

1. The property owner shall submit a copy of the signed inspection form (Exhibit A) together with the video tape of the subject sewer lateral for City review.
2. Documents may be delivered in person between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. (closed for lunch) or sent by mail. Documents sent by mail should be addressed to the Collection System Project Coordinator.
3. Documents shall be submitted to one of the two addresses below:
  - a. Public Works Counter at 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara CA, 93101.
  - b. Collection System Project Coordinator, 520 East Yanonali Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93103.
4. All forms will be stamped with the date they were received.
5. Incomplete forms, unsigned forms, or poor quality videos will be returned to the property owner as incomplete.

B. Review Of Documents

1. City staff will review the lateral inspection tape within five working days of receipt.
2. Videos will be held at the City's wastewater treatment plant for 10 days and may be picked up by the property owner.
3. Tapes not claimed will be disposed.
4. Based on review of the tape, property owners will either be issued a certificate or Notice of Repair.

C. Issuance Of Certificate Compliance

1. The City will issue a standard Sewer Lateral Certificate of Compliance for compliant laterals (Exhibit C).
2. All notices will be sent to the owner on file with the County Assessor's office and to the property address.
3. The City's Advantage permit tracking system will be updated to reflect that an inspection has been completed and the line is in compliance.

D. Issuance Of Notice of Repair

1. Property owners with laterals requiring repairs will be issued a Notice To Repair. The Notice To Repair will specify the date by which repairs must be completed (typically 30 days unless there are extenuating circumstances) as well as the documents needed to verify repair. A Notice To Repair is included as Exhibit D.
2. All notices will be sent to the owner on file with the County Assessor's office and to the property address.
3. Appeals of the Notice To Repair must be made in writing to the Public Works Director within 15 days of receiving the inspection notice.
4. The Public Works Director or his/her designees will review the relevant documents and respond to the property owner within five business days as to whether the appeal is granted.

E. Proof Of Repair

1. Where repairs are required, an issued and signed-off Building Permit and/or Public Works Permit indicating that the work has been properly completed will be the acceptable proof of repair.
2. Public Works or Building and Safety staff will update the Advantage permit tracking system to show that the lateral was repaired and/or replaced.

**SECTION IV - ZONING INFORMATION REPORT PREPARATION (SBMC 28.87.220)**

The templates for the Zoning Information Report (ZIR) will be modified to include two check boxes. The first will indicate that there is a sewer lateral inspection report on file. The second will indicate that there is no report on file.

The report will also include an advisory statement informing the purchaser that it is the property owner's responsibility to maintain the lateral in good condition, and informing the owner that the City has an active inspection program to identify laterals in poor condition.

The ZIR will also contain an advisory statement encouraging the property owner to have the lateral inspected prior to close of escrow.

There will be a line for the buyer to sign acknowledging the advisories regarding the sewer lateral.

Exhibit E is a sample of a revised ZIR report.

## **SECTION V - INCENTIVE PROGRAM**

Purpose: To encourage City residents connected to the City's sewer system to proactively inspect and repair private sewer laterals.

### **A. Incentives**

1. Inspection incentive - Up to \$150 per property when City is provided a videotape and inspection report by a qualified inspector and the City review certifies that the lateral is in good repair. Rebate amount shall not exceed the cost of the inspection.
2. Replacement repair incentive – Up to \$2,000 per property. Rebate amount limited to half the cost of repairs or \$2,000, whichever is less.

### **B. Eligible Properties**

1. Residential properties with three or fewer units (regardless of zoning); and
2. These properties have not been issued an Administrative Penalty for failure to inspect and/or repair the sewer lateral within the last twelve months.

### **C. Ineligible Properties**

1. Commercial properties.
2. Residential properties with four or more units.
3. Common interest developments.
4. Any property that has received an Administrative Penalty within the past 12 months for failure to inspect or repair their sewer.

### **D. Eligible Repairs**

1. Sewer lateral repair or replacement.

### **E. Eligible Costs**

1. City-approved costs and work. (All costs must be approved by the City and all work must be done and completed under appropriate permit or permits.)
2. Costs associated with repair/replacement of lateral.
3. Slip lining costs where slip lining is done by a method approved by the City.
4. Replacement of the line through pipe-bursting when done in accordance with City standards.
5. Installation of cleanout(s) if associated with repair or replacement of existing line.
6. Installation of back-water valve if associated with replacement/repair costs to lateral.
7. Materials for work performed by property owner.

F. In-eligible Costs

1. Labor if performed by property owner.
2. Installation of backwater valve or clean-out not associated with repair/replacement work on lateral.
3. Work performed without required permit(s).
4. Landscaping.

Eligible properties will be identified by information contained in the City's Building Permit tracking system and the City's automated map. Eligibility will be determined by the Public Works Director or his designee(s).

G. Requests To Receive Incentive Payment For Inspection Or Repair

All requests for reimbursement shall be made to the Wastewater Collection System Superintendent. Incentive payment requests must be received by the City within 30 days of completion of the work.

1. Incentive payment request forms and all accompanying materials shall be mailed or hand delivered to one of the following locations:

Public Works Counter  
630 Garden Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Wastewater Collection System Project Coordinator  
El Estero Wastewater Treatment Plant  
520 East Yanonali Street  
P.O. Box 1990  
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

2. Sewer Lateral Incentive Payment Request Forms may be hand delivered between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m and 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
3. Requests shall be made using the standard Sewer Lateral Incentive Payment Request Form (Exhibit F).
4. Proof of work completed shall include:
  - a. A copy of the inspection tape and inspection form (Exhibit A);
  - b. A copy of the invoice from a licensed plumber detailing the work performed and listing the cost of the work; and
  - c. A copy of the inspection form showing the work was completed in compliance with City codes.

The amount of money available for incentives, and the amount of the incentives, shall be set by City Council each year as part of the budget process. Incentive payments will be provided to eligible properties on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available.

H. Other Financial Assistance

Low interest loans may also be available to qualified owners for sewer repair. Please visit the City's housing program on-line at:

<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Resident/Home/Housing/preservation.htm>

or phone the Affordable Housing Programs staff at (805) 564-5461.

I. Permit Fees

Eligible properties (as described in paragraph B above) shall have the permit fees listed below waived:

1. Construction Permit.

A Sewer Line Permit issued by the Building Division typically runs about \$220.00. Eligible property owners will be provided with a transfer slip that will allow the Wastewater Fund to be charged for the amount of this fee.

2. Public Works Fees.

- a. Public Works Trench Inspection Permits are required for work in the public right-of-way. The amount of this fee is currently \$279.50 (2006). Eligible property owners who are required to do repairs in the public right-of-way will be issued a form waiving this fee.
- b. Public Works Tap - When replacement of the lower lateral and re-connection to the sewer main is required, the work will be completed by the City of Santa Barbara or a City contractor.

Normally the person undertaking the work reimburses the City for the cost of labor and materials to connect to the City's sewer. The fee for work performed at eligible properties will be waived. This fee is \$553.00 (2006).

**Exhibits**

- A. Private Sewer Lateral Inspection Form
- B. Inspection Specifications: Standards and Requirements for Closed Circuit Television Survey
- C. Sewer Lateral Certificate of Compliance
- D. Notice To Repair
- E. Sample ZIR report
- F. Sewer Lateral Incentive Payment Request Form